

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA  
ATLANTA DIVISION

ALEXANDER WILLIAMS, *by and*  
*through his Guardian, Conservator,*  
*and Next Friends, Douglas Williams*  
*and Lisa Williams*, et al.; DOUGLAS  
WILLIAMS; and LISA WILLIAMS

Plaintiffs,

v.

MELANIE PICKENS, et al.,

Defendants.

CIVIL ACTION NO.  
1:14-CV-0296-AT

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GARRETT MASON LEE, *by and*  
*through his Guardian, Conservator,*  
*and Next Friend, Shayne Lee,*

Plaintiff,

v.

MELANIE PICKENS, et al.,

Defendants.

CIVIL ACTION NO.  
1:14-CV-1399-AT

**ORDER**

In the Northern District of Georgia, there are at least four pending lawsuits against Melanie Pickens, a former special education teacher at Hopewell Middle School (“Hopewell”) in the Fulton County School District (“District”). See

*Marshall v. Pickens, et al.*, No. 1:11-cv-1110-JEC (the “1110 Case”); *Persadi, et al., v. Pickens, et al.*, No. 1:12-cv-4072-TWT (the “4072 Case”; *Williams, et al., v. Pickens, et al.*, No. 1:14-cv-0296-AT (the “296 Case”); *Mason v. Pickens, et al.*, No. 1:14-cv-1399-AT (the “1399 Case”). The latest two cases case (the 296 and 1399 Cases) were filed in January and May, 2014, and assigned to the undersigned.

In these four cases, the plaintiffs, all special education students in Ms. Pickens’s class, allege that Ms. Pickens violently abused them during the school year. All four cases also name as a Defendant Frances Boyd, Hopewell’s former principal. In the two most recent cases, pending before the undersigned, the plaintiffs also name the District, the former superintendent, the former assistant superintendent, and Ms. Pickens’s co-teacher during the relevant time-period, as well as over twenty others. The four cases overlap in other ways as well, including several individually named parties and, with the exception of the 4072 Case, the same counsel representing the plaintiffs.

The Court is considering whether to consolidate the two cases pending before this Court, Civil Action Nos. 1:14-cv-0296 and 1:14-cv-1399, because they share common facts and questions of law. *See* Fed. R. Civ. P. 42(a). Thus, the Court **DIRECTS** Plaintiffs in the above-captioned cases to file a notice with this Court within fifteen (15) calendar days of the date of this Order addressing the following questions:

1. Are there any cases, other than those identified in this Order and the criminal case against Ms. Pickens, in which plaintiffs allege similar acts of abuse by Ms. Pickens?
2. To what extent are the relevant time periods and conduct the same or substantially similar in all the identified cases involving Ms. Pickens's alleged abuse pending in the Northern District of Georgia, and in particular in the 296 and 1399 Cases?
3. What are the factual or legal differences involved in the 296 and 1399 cases that justified naming defendants not named in the 1110 and 4072 Cases?
4. To what extent do Plaintiffs in the 296 and 1399 Cases anticipate relying on discovery already conducted or expected to be conducted in the two earlier Cases?
5. To what extent will any issue to be decided in the 296 or 1399 Cases also likely be decided in the earlier cases? In light of any such overlapping issues, should the 296 or 1399 Cases be stayed in any part pending determination of any pending motions.
6. Should any portion of the 296 and 1399 actions be stayed in light of the criminal case against Pickens?

Plaintiffs may also lodge any objections to the Court's consolidation of the 296 and 1399 Cases. Plaintiffs' notice filed pursuant to this Order shall not exceed twenty-five (25) pages.

Defendants shall have ten (10) calendar days after Plaintiffs' filing of the aforementioned Notice to file a response, not to exceed twenty-five (25) pages.

**IT IS SO ORDERED** this 16th day of May, 2014.

  
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**Amy Totenberg**  
**United States District Judge**